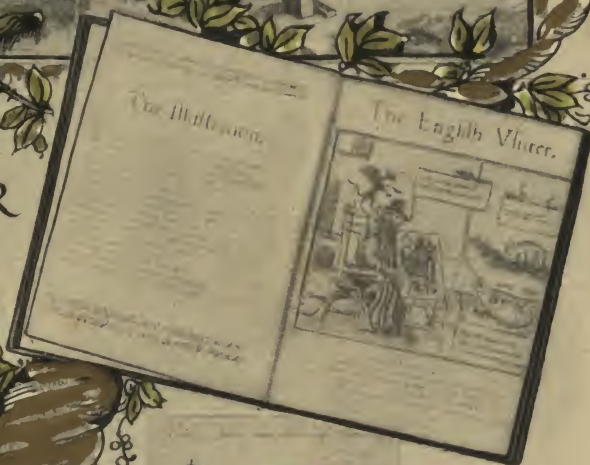




FOURTEENTH DINNER
 on FRIDAY EVENING, NOVEMBER
 the TWENTIETH, ONE THOUSAND
 NINE HUNDRED and FOURTEEN
 at 324 WEST 86th STREET



Menu
 Pamplemousse
 POTAGE JULIEN
 Hors d'œuvres
 POISSON
 Pigeons Petits Pois
 SELLE de MOYTON
 Pommes au naturel
 Salade Endive



Amontillado Sherry
 Chateau d'Yqueur
 1895
 Pontet Canet
 1893

Glaces

Gâteaux

Fromage Camembert

Liqueurs

Fruits

Café

Curiosities
Of Early Economic Literature

AN ADDRESS
TO HIS FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE
HOBBY CLUB OF
NEW YORK
BY
EDWIN R. A. SELIGMAN



SAN FRANCISCO
PRIVATELY PRINTED BY
JOHN HENRY NASH
MDCCCXX

A Note

TO MY FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE HOBBY CLUB

The following address, as you will doubtless recall, was read at the fourteenth quarterly dinner of the Club in Nineteen Hundred & Fourteen. Owing to the outbreak of the Great War its appearance in print was delayed. With the advent of peace, however, and taking advantage of a sojourn on the Pacific Coast, I was fortunate in securing the cooperation of Mr. John Henry Nash, without doubt *facile princeps* among American printers. As a result of his masterly work I venture to hope that the address in its present form may be considered worthy of a permanent place in the archives of the Club. I trust, also, that you will not deem inappropriate the reproduction of the menu which, according to a time-honored custom of the Club, was originally prepared by our indefatigable secretary, and the pictorial features of which are explained in the address itself.

Fraternally yours

EDWIN R. A. SELIGMAN

University of California

Berkeley, May, 1920

I

Curiosities of Early Economic Literature

AN ADDRESS TO
HIS FELLOW MEMBERS OF THE HOBBY CLUB BY
EDWIN R. A. SELIGMAN

LIKE most sciences, economics also has its lighter side; and I have been asked to say something to you tonight about a few of the more amusing and curious aspects of what is generally—but of course mistakenly—dubbed the dismal science. It would, perhaps, have been easier for me to say something about the diverting aspects of collecting a library of thirty thousand volumes, part of which you see in this room; but I have been directed carefully to avoid the personal aspects of the case and to confine myself to the topic mentioned.

When we speak of early economic literature, it is important to know exactly what is meant. In a certain sense, economic literature is as old as literature itself; for from the very beginning thinkers took an interest in the explanation of the every-day facts of business life about them. There is in truth an economic literature to be found in ancient Egypt, in Babylon, and in Carthage; and not a few of our modern economic principles can be traced back to the writings of the Greek philosophers.

In the early Middle Ages, again, the moral aspect of certain business practices and relations and the justification of private property itself were discussed at length by the theologians, glossators, and jurists. If by early economic literature is meant the mediæval literature on economic topics, there would be abundant opportunity to call attention to the more amusing examples of hair-splitting subtleties which are to be found in the economic discussions as well as in the theological disputations.

By the literature of economics, however, is commonly understood the literature of the modern discipline of economics, that is, of the science which deals with business activities under economic conditions as they have developed since the advent of industrial capital. Strictly speaking, modern economic science has developed only since the coming of the factory system, that is, the system where capital has permeated every part of the productive process. But as capital began to be of importance at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, when the guild system was being replaced by the domestic system in industry and when the early trading companies carried on the commerce of the day, early economic literature is generally considered to be the

literature of that early period, namely, from the close of the sixteenth to the beginning of the eighteenth century.

It was at this period that the economic problems began to be discussed from a modern, rather than a mediæval, point of view; and it is especially in this twilight zone that we find some interesting and curious illustrations of the aberrations of the human intellect in connection with the discussion of economic topics. To some of these curiosities I shall now proceed to call attention, confining myself, however, this evening, to the English literature.

CHAPTER I

THE first problem to which the English writers devoted themselves was one which was in reality a relic of the Middle Ages, namely, the usury question. It is a familiar fact that the taking of usury,—by which was meant in the Middle Ages the return for a loan of whatever kind—was absolutely forbidden by law, both divine and civil. But the reason of the prohibition has ordinarily been much misunderstood. The common man still accepts the explanation given in *The Merchant of Venice*, an explanation which is to be traced back to a passage of Aristotle. The Greek word for interest was *τοκὸς*, from *τίκτομαι*, to beget or produce, and as a coin did not produce its young naturally like a cow or a sheep, interest was deemed unnatural. This is what Shakespeare means when he speaks of “the barren breed of the money metal.”

The mediæval explanation, was, however, something entirely different. It was a curious product of mistaken subtlety in analysis. The mediæval writers divided commodities into consumptible and non-consumptible. A consumptible commodity was one which could be used only by destroying it completely, that is, by consuming it entirely, like a piece of coal or a plate of ice cream. Again, commodities were either fungible or infungible. A fungible commodity was what we in modern times call a representative good, that is, the subject of an obligation which can be discharged by the return, not of the commodity itself, but of a similar commodity, such as a certain grade of wheat, etc. Now, in the eyes of the mediæval writers, interest was regarded as a return for the use of money—of coin. Money, however, in their view was not only a fungible, but also a consumptible commodity, for the sole use of a coin was to serve as a medium of exchange, and it fulfilled its entire function through the exchange.

If then I lend somebody a coin, for no matter how long a period, and if the coin or its representative is finally returned to me at the expiration of the pe-

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riod, that is all that I have a right to demand. It is not legitimate to ask something additional for the use of the coin, because when I hand over the coin, by that very fact my property in the coin is transferred and with the ownership goes any usance or usufruct of the property. A gold vase may indeed be loaned and a charge made for the use of it because, in transferring the vase, I do not turn over the ownership. But since money is a fungible and consumptible commodity, we can not separate use from ownership: in parting with the coin, we part with the property-right in the coin. We cannot therefore demand both the return of the coin and a payment for its use. The payment for the use—the usury—is illegitimate because it represents a double payment.

This was the mediæval theory which led to the prohibition of all interest or so-called usury. Yet, in the course of time, as trade and commerce developed, it became necessary to make some exceptions, or rather to provide for certain transactions which might be deemed to fall outside of the reason of the rule. The gradual development of these evasions of the usury principle forms one of the most diverting chapters in the history of human thought. I shall content myself here with calling attention to a few of the English books which were published at the end of the sixteenth, and the beginning of the seventeenth, century at a time when the field of capital was rapidly developing and when the old theory was fading away.

One of the most widely read books was the anonymous work (written by M. P. Cæsar) "imprinted at London for Andrew Maunsell in Paules Church-yard, at the signe of the Parret" in 1578, with the pleasing title *A general discourse against the damnable sect of Vsurers, grounded upon the word of God, and confirmed by the auctoritie of Doctours both auncient, and newe; necessarie for all tymes, but most profitable for these later daies, in which, Charitie being banished, Covetousnes hath gotten the upper hande*. In this book usury is still frowned upon, but if the lender can prove that he has suffered an actual loss by the transaction, he is entitled to charge what became known as interest. Interest is defined as "a gaine cissing and a damage rising" and reference is made to the authority of Luther and Melancthon on that point. An example is given, as follows: "If one is bounde to paie me twentie crounes on the calendes of Maye, and doth not: and if I through his disappointing me runne into any daunger, as if I should have paid the same to another at that very tyme, here is it meete that equalitie be observed, in that he gained by mine: but equalitie is not observed

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if he by my lending be made ritche and I by his breaking daie, be made poore: that is called Interest for the damage rising."

A clearer picture, perhaps, of the situation is contained in a book published in 1595 by Myles Mosse, "minister of the worde and bachelor of divinitie," printed by the Widdow Orwin for John Porter, entitled *The arraignment and conviction of usurie that is, the iniquitie and unlawfulness of usury displayed*. The good divine makes the following four points: first, usury is committed not only in lending; usury consists in lending for gain; usury consists in compacting for gain; and, in usury there is no adventuring of the principal. He discusses the matter under the following rubrics: first, what lending is, and how it differs from other contracts in which money is passed; secondly, what is meant exactly by lending for gain and what the justification is for taking a return in case the gain is really not intended; thirdly, what is meant by a compact and how something may be paid for the use of money if there is no compact; and fourthly, what is meant by the adventuring or the risking of the principal. As to this last point it was very clear to the later writers that if there was any risk involved in the enterprise, the charge for the loan might be considered a partial return for the risk of loss.

The ordinary doctrine is found as late as 1634 in a widely read book entitled *The English Usurer*, the title-page of which, reproduced in the menu printed as a frontispiece to this essay, contains two exceedingly interesting cuts. In one the gorgeously attired usurer with a strong box at his side is seated on a finely carved stool, counting on a table his ill-gotten gains in the shape of a heap of coins and holding in his other hand some of the title-deeds to the property which he has acquired. On the top rung of the chair stands the noisome half-devil, half-unicorn, with outstretched fangs; and issuing from the mouth of the usurer is the pregnant sentence, which seems to embody the whole of the mediæval theory: "I say, I will have all, both Vse and principall." The other half of the page is occupied by two hogs; the top one with his snout in the golden coin and emitting the sentiment: "Mine is the usurer's desire, to roote in earth, wallow in mire." The lower hog is lying on his back, having evidently expired in the attempt to swallow too many of the obdurate coins, but still possessing sufficient vitality to utter the sentiment: "Living spare me, and Dead share me." The author, recalling the fact that the Hebrew word for usury is "neshec" (biting), adds: "Whatsoever the Vsurer lendeth, it hath teeth and jawes to eate and consume the substance of other men."

This idea is brought out still more clearly in a work entitled *A short and private discussion between Mr. Bolton and one M. S. concerning usury*, published in London in 1637. Bolton tells us as follows: "All Usury biteth. Money so lent commeth not empty home; but biteth off, Knaweth away, and bringeth with it some part of the borrower's wealth and substance, who, if He cannot licke himself whole againe, or heale His wound by biting others (as commonly they doe) He findeth and feeleth in the end, that Usury hath teeth."

"Biting is individuall and essentiall both to the name, and nature of Usury. It ever bites, and stings one, or other, lesse, or more, either the Borrower, or the Common-wealth. Either like the morning Wolfe, it sucks out the life, the bloud, and the marrow of a poore man; Or like a mastive it snatches a peece and portion out of the Borrowers substance: Or like a Waspe or the Dog-flie, it stings Him, one way, or the other in His estate. All sorts of Usury, even from the one hundredth part monethly unto ten shillings in an hundred pounds, hath teeth. Some more empoisoned bloody Fangs then other; but all bite. There is a tooth in every Usury."

This author considers especially the question as to whether the taking of a moderate interest, like eight per centum, is really less objectionable. He answers as follows: "Thou sinnst lesse indeed than those cruell and cut-throat Cannibals that besides after 10. in the 100. must have a load of Coales or some other gratuity. But for all that, thou art not freed from usurious guilt and greed-inesse. Suppose a malefactor at barre should cry out unto the Judge; that whereas His fellow-prisoners, some of them had stolen Horses, others broke houses, others rob'd by the hie way, others killed men; He onely had but stolen a few sheepe: would this acquit Him? Nay, He would be burned in the hand for a rogue, at least." And he adds: "A Pen-knife thrust unto the heart will dispatch a man as well, as all the daggers that stab'd Cesar. A moate in the eye, if it be not got out in time, may grow to a pin and web. A man's conscience may suffer shipwrack as well upon a sand, as upon a Rock. When men make question of moderate Usury, whether that be lawfull or not: They might as well make question whether moderate adultery, or moderate lying, or moderate theft is lawfull." Our author, it will be seen, makes no concessions whatever.

One of the most amusing of the seventeenth century works on the subject is the anonymous book, published in 1634, under the title *Of the death of usury or the disgrace of usurers. Compiled more pithily than hitherto hath beene published*

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Curiosities of *in English. Wherein Vsury is most lively unfolded, defined, and confuted; with an*
Early Economic *Explanation of the Statutes now in force concerning Vsury, very profitable for this*
Literature *present Age.* Perhaps the most important part of this work is the magnificent folded plate inserted before the title and entitled "Opera d'enfer," showing, as the title indicates, the various proceedings applicable to usurers that take place in the nether regions. Here we find a big chimney with a raging fire in which are visible, on spits, various ci-devant usurers revolving in different stages of being turned brown. In front of the fireplace are two or three smaller cauldrons, each with an intense fire beneath and on top some very prosperous looking individuals who are being treated to various forms of the third degree by the devils, large and small. Over one of these cauldrons a peculiarly diabolical looking sprite is holding the unfortunate victim by the ears, while another is inserting into his mouth various emetics which cause him to disgorge precious coins into a plate held by a long handle by another member of the diabolical fraternity. Over the other cauldron is seated a similar unfortunate, who is being treated to still more nameless tortures, with the result that coins exude from every part of him, while a wicked looking devil is fanning the flames with a long bellows. On the lintel above the fireplace a half dozen members of a diabolical orchestra are making the scene hideous by performing upon remarkable looking instruments, and on the side of the scene is the devil-in-chief, gleefully counting up the accumulated masses of coins.

This book marks, however, the turning point. For from now on, a distinction, already recognized in law, was made between legitimate interest and illegitimate usury, the criterion henceforth being not the character of the transaction but the rate of the return; and the way was being paved for the final disappearance of all usury laws, which has not come about until our own time.

CHAPTER II

IT is well known to all members of the Hobby Club that when tobacco was first introduced into England, it met with a rather chilly reception. Not only was smoking itself for a considerable time deemed to be something unbefitting a gentleman, but dealers in the noxious weed were put on a level, not so much with publicans who dispensed liquors, as with keepers of disorderly houses. King James' *Counterblaste against Tobacco* is known to all, but what is perhaps less familiar is the great mass of literature that was printed

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at the beginning of the seventeenth century in order to show the evils of smoking. From this literature, which has now become very rare, I shall make only one selection, namely, from a book published in London in 1616, and printed by Richard Field, dwelling in Great Wood Street. The expressive title is as follows: *Tobacco tortured, or the filthie fume of Tobacco refined: shewing all sorts of Subjects, that the inward taking of Tobacco fumes, is very pernicious vnto their bodies; too too profluous for many of their purses; and most pestiferous to the publike State. Exemplified apparently by most fearefull effects.* The author adds, on the title-page, a quotation from Proverbs xxvii, 9, "If 'sweet oynements and perfumes do undoubtedly reioyce the heart of a man,' then surely, all noysome savours and poysonsme smels (such as is the filthie fume of Tobacco) inwardly taken, must necessarily disquiet and drive the same into a dangerous condition."

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In this book of almost two hundred pages, the disadvantages of smoking are set forth in great detail. Perhaps it will be sufficient to quote one paragraph in which the dire physical consequences are set forth. The author tells us that the unfortunate smokers will be affected "with excessive paines in the head, with over much want of sleepe, with whirling Vertigoes, with most fearfull Phrenesies, with drowsie Lethargies, with losse of Memorie, with congealing Catalepsies, with restrayning Apoplexies, with trembling Palsies, with attaching Epilepsies, with dangerous Squinancies, with deadly Pleurisies, with choaking Peripneumonies, with violent Convulsions, with benumbing Ephialties, with suffocating Ptisicks, with inpostumating Empiemics." The unfortunate smokers moreover are "fearefully subjected to deadly distemperatures, to fiery Inflammations, to dangerous languishing weakenesses, to Stranguries, to tumorous swellings, to overflowing Icteries, to languishing Cachexies, to swelling Dropsies, to congealing Sciaticaes, to creeping Podagraes and with what not besides." I forbear to mention all the moral, social, and intellectual infirmities which would follow from the use of the deadly nicotine, as these are familiar to the members of the Hobby Club.

CHAPTER III

THE first considerable economic controversy in Great Britain occurred at the beginning of the third decade of the seventeenth century. At that time everybody still believed that money, if not the chief form of wealth, was at least its chief embodiment, and that the wealth of a country

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was best represented by the amount of coin and bullion within its borders. As to this, there was no dispute; but as to the best method of insuring an abundant supply of money, there now arose a vigorous difference of opinion. The older writers in possession of the field were the so-called Bullionists, or believers in the theory of the balance of bargain. They held that under no account ought coin to be exported, and that when any foreign traders came to England to sell their wares, they should be compelled in turn to devote the money which they received in pay to the purchase of English commodities. Such, for instance, was the meaning of the famous statutes of employment enacted during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, whereby the foreign merchant was compelled to "employ" his money in the purchasing of goods of the realm. It was for a similar reason that it was not permissible for the bankers or goldsmiths to issue bills of exchange, as is the custom in modern times; for it was feared that gold or silver might be exported to foreign countries to meet drafts when presented. All such transactions were accordingly entrusted to an official known as the Royal Exchanger, who was held to a guarantee that not bullion or coin, but commodities, should be exported to meet the bills when falling due abroad.

In opposition to this school of thought, there now arose a set of thinkers who came to be known, at least later on in England, as Mercantilists. These advocated the balance-of-trade doctrine as over against this balance-of-bargain theory. The Mercantilists were the earliest nationalists. They first developed the conception of national wealth and of the necessity of a national program to ensure national industry and commerce. They were called Mercantilists, in England at least, because they held that England's prosperity was intimately bound up with the possibilities of foreign commerce or merchandising. But what they really desired was a system of industrial protection in order to develop the national resources to further national prosperity. To them, the great index of prosperity was an excess of exports over imports. This balance of trade was the only balance which, in their opinion, was of any importance; and it was again only as a result of such a balance or excess of exports that it would be possible to get, and to keep, the coin in the country. To the Bullionist, the Mercantilists replied that all his efforts would be in vain as long as imports exceeded exports; and, on the other hand, they maintained that if exports exceeded imports, all the institutions of the old régime, with its statutes of employment, its Royal Exchanger and the like, were useless.

The first controversy on this point took place originally in Italy, between 1610 and 1612, when the Italian writer Serra espoused the doctrine of the Mercantilists against a certain Marc Antony, who was still a Bullionist. The echoes of this controversy, however, never reached England; and in England the controversy developed independently on the part of two distinguished writers, Edward Misselden and Gerard Malynes, the former an official, the second a merchant. The controversy was continued in a number of works and finally became so heated that it degenerated into fierce personal invectives. Into the details of this controversy I shall not enter, but shall content myself with calling attention to a few of the delectable bits as found in the very rare lucubrations of these authors.

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Misselden started out in 1622 with an anonymous book entitled *Free Trade or the meanes to make trade flourish, Wherein the Causes of the Decay of Trade in this Kingdome are discovered and the remedies also to remoove the same are represented*. Free trade, by the way, it may be stated, denoted in those days something very different from what it signifies today. It did not mean freedom to import goods without payment of duty. On the contrary, to Misselden as to all the free traders of the day, free trade meant freedom to export goods as over against the companies which possessed a monopoly of trade, like the East India Company, or the Merchants Adventurers. The freedom of trade meant freedom of competition, not freedom or exemption from taxation or duties. Almost all the "Free Traders" were in fact what we should today call Protectionists.

Misselden accordingly devotes a special chapter to monopoly and has a great deal to say about the abuses of what he calls the monopolian, advancing the arguments which soon became the stock in trade of the Mercantilist school. Malynes, who had already published in 1601 *A Treatise of the Canker of England's Commonwealth*, containing the older ideas, entered the lists in the same year (1622) with a reply entitled *The maintenance of free trade according to the three essentiall parts of trafficque, namely, commodities, moneys and exchange of moneys, by Bills of Exchanges for other Countries, Or an Answer to a treatise of free trade*. Malynes tells us in his preface that his work is only an introduction to a larger book on the subject (which was, in fact, published soon thereafter under the title *Lex Mercatoria* or the Law Merchant). In his dedication to the King he asks him to read his small treatise "which (like unto the little fish, mentioned by Plutarch, swimming before the great Whale, giving notice of dangerous

shallow places;) shall be amply explained in a larger Volume." In this work all the stock arguments of the Bullionists are set forth in detail and objections are raised, but in perfectly decorous language, to the work of Misselden.

Misselden, however, now became rather excited, and in the following year published, under his own initials, another work with the interesting title *The circle of commerce or the ballance of Trade, in defence of free Trade: opposed to Malynes' Little Fish and his Great Whale, and poised against them in the Scale*. In the preface he calls attention to the well-known story of Giotto, who was able to win preferment by drawing freehand a perfect circle, and he adds, in his dedication: "Others, My Lord, may present unto Your Lordship Little Fishes, Great Whales, Pieces of greater price; I have nothing but a Circle; not the Circle of learning; but the Circle of Commerce: yet such a Circle as comprehends within the Periphery, or circumference thereof, the Ballance of Trade."

Toward the close of the book, he pays his compliments to Malynes and congratulates himself that he has gotten "out of the Labyrinth of his Little Fish and his Great Whale, which, having poised and found as light as vanity in the Ballance, and therefore deserve no place within the Circle of Commerce, I shall dismissee as sometimes St. Augustine did, the Erronious writings of Maniches with this farewell: 'A childish toye, a blockish beginning, a rotten middle, and a ruinous end.'" Having started in this way, Misselden grows bolder and tells us: "Such also is his Little Fish, such his Great Whale, full fraught with stolen stuffe out of French Copies, Dutch Bookes, and English manuscripts; whole bookes swallowed up in them for his owne." After having informed us that Malynes' *Law Merchant* should have been visited with "Merchants Law, or rather Marshall Law," he adds: "I would Malynes had consulted with the wise man, to have held his peace, that he might have seemed wise, Or that he had not been like to Horace, his Crow, by too much chattering, to lose his cheese: or like Æsops dog, by too much gaping, to let falle his bone. *Qualis vir, talis Oratio*: the man is confused, and so is his matter." He concludes: "Not willing to be Censorious, I shall leave him and it to the sentence of the wise."

It would have been too much to expect Malynes not to reply, although in reality he was getting the worst of the argument. His concluding work appeared a few months later, under the title *The Center of the Circle of Commerce, or a Refutation of a Treatise intituled The Circle of Commerce or The Ballance of Trade*.

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After calling attention to Misselden's book, "copious of uncivill speeches," Malynes makes a good point by stating that still more difficult than to make an exact circle is to find off hand the exact centre of the circle, and this more difficult feat he thinks he has accomplished, for gain he describes as the centre of the circle. This he proposes to explain "in plaine and significant words, fit for every mans understanding, without affectation of superfiary termes of Art, by demonstrative reasons and infallible arguments." He tells us further: "Having resolved to containe myself within the circle of modestie, remembring the saying of Socrates, 'If an Asse kicke thee, wilt thou kicke him againe?' I am only to addresse some few speeches unto him by way of imitation." Toward the end of his discourse, however, he is so carried away by his own eloquence that he forgets his warning and delivers himself of some choice bits. Calling attention to the rejoicing of Misselden that he had gotten out of the labyrinth of the little fish and the great whale, he says that "This little Spawne will sticke so fast in his Throate that he shall have neede of Cranes to plucke it out." "It is sufficient for me to shew that (as it is in the fable of the Fox) he hath onely licked the out side of the Glasse of true judgement in this matter of State, but could never come to the Pottage or Center." A little later on he writes: "I still do strive to be temperate, but publike slaunders cannot be washed off but by publike defences." He closes by telling us that Misselden "hath undertaken (with the Artificiall wings of his supporters set on with wax) to fly so high in the discourse, that this hot climate hath dissolved the wax and the splendant Beames of the Sunne of truth hath dispelled all foggy misteries of deceitfull fallacies, as aforesaid; so that he is drowned (with his Ballance) in the Sea of Exchange." Thus comes to an end the first controversy in the literature of English economics.

CHAPTER IV

ONE of the most interesting phases of economic literature is in connection with the attempt to introduce banking into England. Modern banking, as is well known, originated in the mediæval Italian cities and gradually spread to France and the Low Countries, from which it was finally introduced into England at the end of the seventeenth century. A bank, in those days, meant something very different from what it means today. The word "bank" then denoted a heap or pile, as is still the case in the word sand-bank, or mudbank. The original bank was simply a pile or heap of money that

was kept for purposes of safety by the banker or was retained as a fund with which to exchange currency. It was only very slowly that the more modern banking functions were added.

In England, literature in support of banking began about the middle of the seventeenth century. One of the earliest and most interesting of these works written in behalf of banking was an anonymous folio volume from the pen of William Potter and published in 1650. The title-page of this extremely rare work is worth quoting in full. It is as follows:

The Key of Wealth: or A new Way for Improving of Trade: Lawfull, Easie, Safe, and Effectuall; Showing how A few Tradesmen agreeing together, may both double their Stocks, and the increase thereof, Without

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. Paying any Interest. | 4. Staying for Materialls. |
| 2. Great difficulty or hazard. | 5. Prejudicing to any Trade, or Person. |
| 3. Advance of Money. | 6. Incurring any other inconvenience. |

In such sort, as both they and all others (though never so poore) who are in a way of trading, may

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. Multiply their Returnes. | 4. Put the whole Nation upon this practice. |
| 2. Deale onely for ready Pay. | 5. Gain notwithstanding more than the ordinary. |
| 3. Much under-sell others. | 6. Desist when they please without damage. |

And so, as the same shall tend much to

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Enrich the people of this Land. | 13. Abate the price of commodity. |
| 2. Disperse the money hoarded up. | 14. Provide store against famine. |
| 3. Import Bullion from beyond Sea. | 15. Relieve and employ the poor. |
| 4. Raise banks of money in diverse places. | 16. Augment custome and Excize. |
| 5. Settle a secure and known credit. | 17. Promote the sales of Lands. |
| 6. Make such credit current. | 18. Remove the causes of imprisonment for debt. |
| 7. Extend such credit to any degree needfull. | 19. Lessen the hazard of trading on credit. |
| 8. Quicken the revolution of money & credit. | 20. Prevent high-way thieves. |
| 9. Diminish the interest for moneys. | 21. Multiply Ships for defence at Sea. |
| 10. Make commodity supply the place of money. | 22. Multiply means for defence at Land. |
| 11. Ingrosse the trade of Europe. | 23. Incorporate the whole strength of England. |
| 12. Fill the Land with commodity. | 24. Take away advantages of opposition. |

All which in this Treatise is conceived by judicious men to be fully proved, Doubts resolved, and Objections either answered or prevented. London Printed by R. A. and to be sold by Giles Calvert at the black spread Eagle neer the West end of Pauls. 1650.

This particular volume is of additional interest because we know that a copy—perhaps the same copy which is here exhibited to you—was brought to the American colonies and gave the impulse to the first and shortlived banking experiment in Massachusetts, in 1681. It was not until over a decade later that

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the bank of England was founded. Both in England and in the colonies, however, great attention was paid also to banking based on the mortgage of lands and on the pledge of securities. Land bank schemes now became very common in the mother country as well as in the colonies, while the projects of the latter kind—based on pledge of securities—derived their name from the Lombardy bankers. To this day yet, in Germany, Lombard credit is a well defined and distinct kind of credit. In the American colonies, however, the scheme came to be known by the name of the project of “merchandise lumber,” or Lumber Banks, an amusing corruption of Lombard.

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The first real movement in the American colonies for banking in the more modern sense began in 1714. Before that period there had been numerous so-called banks in the American colonies, but these were simply batches of paper money or government notes, issued after the expedition to Canada in the '90's. The first attempt to start a bank in the modern sense was made in 1714. The title of the work in which the plan is set forth is *A model For Erecting a Bank of Credit; with a Discourse in Explanation thereof. Adapted to the Use of any Trading Countrey where there is a Scarcity of Moneys, more Especially for His Majesties Plantations in America*. This was printed in London and reprinted in Boston in the same year. It led to a copious controversial literature, one of the earliest independent New England publications, a copy of the title-page of which is printed on the menu, being entitled *A Projection For Erecting a Bank of Credit in Boston, New England, Founded on Land Security. Printed in the year 1714*.

The controversy, which was originally one between the advocates of coin banks and those of land banks, was soon complicated by the question of preference between banks of any kind in the modern sense and banks in the older sense of issues of paper money. Among the many entertaining tracts of the early part of the eighteenth century, I shall content myself with calling attention to three of especial interest.

In 1721, there was published in Boston a tract with the title: *A Word of Comfort to a Melancholy Country on the Bank of Credit. Erected in the Massachusetts Bay. Fairly Defended by a Discovery of the Great Benefit, accruing by it to the Whole Province; With a Remedy for Recovering a Civil State when Sinking under Desperation by a Defeat on their Bank of Credit. By Amicus Patriæ. Boston, 1721*. The anonymous “Friend of his Country” was a certain John Wise. The opening sentence is instructive:

"To Consider This People so Enobled in their Government; Religion, Trade, Produce, and Properties in Soyle; with their Manly Genius, and Wisdom and being so manny Great and Royal Gifts of Heaven; It would grieve a Man's Heart, who is either a true Lover of his Country, or of Mankind, to see them Intangled (as once Abraham's Miraculous Victim was caught in a Thicket) in a Labyrinth of perplexing Thoughts, in so plain a Case, as they are now Labouring under." To the author the solution was very plain, for he says: "Without a Medium, there will be no Evading most Rueful Circumstances in a Little Time; all things will Jumble, Run Retrograde, and Tumble into Caos; and this must needs fill us with many Evils both of Sin, and Misery; as Murmurings, Revilings of Governments, Injustice, Oppressions, Discouragements; and possibly desperation it self: For what will most Men care for, in such a Confounded Condition, more than just to shuffle along thro' an Unfortunate World and let them that come after e'en shift for themselves."

Our author was not a friend of coin, for he tells us that "The Money Medium inclines Men more to Extortion, Dissembling, and other Moral Evils in Trade than One which has no Intrinsik Value in it. . . . The Paper Medium is easy of Exchange, and not so apt to corrupt the Mind." He paints the advantages of paper in glowing terms. From the alleged benefits which he recounts in detail, I shall quote only two:

"The Farmer must be duly and sufficiently encouraged or you ruin all. Keep him in a thread-bare Coat, and starve him of his Profits, by Pinching and Penurious Markets, and Prices, you will then much dis-animate one of the best Servants to the Crown and, the means of your Plenty, your Safety, and Flourishing Condition." But if we have a paper issue, says he, all "this animates the Farmer; keeps him to his Plough; Brightens and inlivens all his Rurall Schemes; Reconciles him to all his hard Labour; and makes him look Fat and Chearful."

The other striking advantage of paper money is said to be that it will increase population, for "Many of our People are slow in Marrying, for want of Settlements: whereas in old Countries, they generally Marry without such Precaution, and so increase infinitely. We have Old Batchelours, with Dames to Match them, to settle several Towns. . . . To pretend to Manufactures, without a great Overplus in our Number of People is but to talk Chymaeras." The obvious objection, however, to paper money, is that it will depreciate, and to this difficulty

our author addresses himself most resolutely. The pertinent passage deserves to be quoted in full:

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"You must do by your Bills, as all Wise Men do by their Wives; Make the best of them. It is an acknowledged Theorem, that there is no doing without Wives. The Lonesome and sower Phylosopher would frankly confess, that Women were necessary Evils: for without their Assistance, the whole Humane Race must vanish. The great Skill is to cultivate the necessity and make it a Happiness; for that end Wise Men Love their Wives; and what ill-conveniences they find in them, they bury; and what Vertues, they are inrich't with, they Admire and Magnifie. And thus you must do by your Bills, for there is no doing without them; if you Divorce or Disseize yourselves of them, you are undone; Therefore you must set them high in your Estimation; and be no ways Prodigal of their Reputation, so as to villify or run them down; as tho' they had more mischief than Good in them. All manner of Aspersions cast upon them by Fear or Jealousies must be wip't off. . . . Such a temper of Mind will forever not only secure the Currency of our Bills; but will most certainly keep up their Value equal with Money."

The pleadings of this eloquent advocate had some success for a time, but the plan met with many objections. A few years later, in 1726, the depressed condition of business led to an anonymous work entitled *The Melancholie State of this Province, Considered, in a Letter From a Gentleman in Boston to his Friend in the Country*. The author strenuously objects to the government interfering with paper money and to people being compelled to pay in coin: "Will the Government suffer such horrid Injustice. No surely. No Christian man can hear these Things and not be deeply affected at the Thoughts of such monstrous Extortion and Oppression, breaking in like a Torrent upon the People, much less will a Christian Gentleman suffer it." Unfortunately for him, not only did the Christian gentlemen suffer it, but before very long, the government of the mother country declared all such issues illegal.

Just about at the time when this was done, the last despairing appeal was issued in Boston, in 1750, with the significant title: *Massachusetts in Agony: or Important Hints to the Inhabitants of the Province; Calling aloud for Justice to be done to the Oppressed; and avert the Impending Wrath over the Oppressors, By Vincent Centinel*. The picture that the author gives of existing conditions is a moving one: "Poverty and Discontent appear in every Face, (except the Countenances

of the Rich,) and dwell upon every Tongue. Trade and Business (as Birds leave an inclement Climate) are flying away.— Children leave their aged Parents, and go off among Strangers; Provision is dear, Money scarce, few Inhabitants, Taxes high, House Rent high, Clothing dear, Fuel dear, Creditors oppressive,— Such is our Condition, that the Hand cannot feed the Mouth, and what is so Rebellious as the Belly?” To the lack of paper money our author ascribes the growing disparity of wealth, which was already so evident in New England at that time. Referring to the well-to-do, he exclaims:

“No Wonder such Men can build Ships, Houses, buy Farms, set up their Coaches, Chariots, live very splendidly, purchase Fame, Posts of Honour, (if any besides themselves think there is any Honour in it) no wonder such People want all to themselves; for, generally speaking, the more Riches, the less Wisdom; and often the heavier the Purse, the lighter the Head; and when People are lightheaded, they make a queer Figure.”

All, however, was in vain; and although another still more eloquent appeal was published in the following year, 1751, entitled *Appendix to Massachusetts in Agony*. By *Cornelius Agrippa*, the mother country proved implacable and the further issue of paper money was stopped, in the Northern colonies at least, until the outbreak of the Revolutionary War.

CHAPTER V

AN entirely different train of thought is represented by what may be called, in some respects, the first socialistic literature in England. Strictly speaking, there was no socialism anywhere until the advent of the modern industrial or factory system. For it is only the coming of machinery and the control of all the means of production by the capitalists, that have engendered the theory of modern socialism, whether scientific or otherwise. It is interesting to note, however, that one of the earliest movements in opposition to private property occurred in the middle of the seventeenth century, at the time of the formation of the Commonwealth. This movement, which until very recently was shrouded in mystery, is called the Digger movement, because of the fact that its advocates seized and dug up certain lands in the neighborhood of London, in an attempt to support themselves by the produce. Of the external history of this Digger movement, there is no time to speak; but I desire to call attention, in view of the rarity of the books, to the productions

of the leaders, and especially of Gerrard Winstanley, who was the chief literary exponent of the movement.

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Gerrard Winstanley was born in 1609. He lived in London as a small merchant, but was not very successful, and toward the end of the '40's, he became interested in religion, being finally driven to his socialistic conclusions from a study of the Bible. Many of the later Quaker doctrines are to be found in his earlier theological treatises.

In 1648, he published a work which I hold in my hand, and which is so very scarce that there is no copy in the British Museum or in the Bodleian Library. The only other copy in existence is in the Jesus College Library at Oxford. It is entitled: *The New Law of Righteousnes, Budding forth, in restoring the whole Creation from the bondage or the curse. Or a Glimpse of the new Heaven and the new Earth, wherein dwells Righteousnes, giving an Alarm to silence all that preach from hear-say or imagination. London, Printed for Giles Calvert, at the Black Spread Eagle, at the west end of Pauls. 1649.*

Winstanley begins with his interpretation of the allegorical stories of the creation and the fall. He points out how the fall of man is due to the fact that he gets riches: "And this is the beginning of particular interest, buying and selling the earth from one particular hand to another, saying *This is mine*, upholding this particular propriety by a law of government of his own making, and thereby restraining other fellow-creatures from seeking nourishment from their mother earth. So that though a man was bred up in a Land, yet he must not worke for himself where he would sit down, But for Adam; that is, for such a one that had bought part of the Land, or came to it by inheritance of his deceased parents, and called it his own Land. So that he that had no Land, was to work for those for small wages that called the Land theirs; and thereby some are lifted up into the chair of tyranny, and others trod under the footstool of misery, as if the earth were made for a few, and not for all men." And then he adds: "This is unrighteous Adam, that dammed up the water springs of universal liberty, and brought the Creation under the curse of bondage, sorrow, and tears. But when the Earth becomes a common treasury, as it was in the beginning, and the King of Righteousnesse comes to rule in every ones heart, then he kills the first Adam; for covetousnesse thereby is killed."

A little later he published another work entitled *Light shining in Buckinghamshire, or a Discovery of the main grounds; Originall Cause of all the Slavery in the*

World, but chiefly in England. Here he repeats the idea that private property in land is the origin of evil in the following words:

"But man following his own sensualitie became a devourer of the creatures and an incloser, not content that another should enjoy the same priviledge as himself, but incloseth all from his Brother; so that all the Land, Trees, Beasts, Fish, Fowle, etc., are inclosed into a few mercinary hands; and all the rest deprived and made their slaves."

Winstanley was at great pains to point out why all freedom-loving people should side with Cromwell, rather than with the monarchists, and he did his best to inject an economic motive into the political contest. He tells us:

"Rich men cry for a King, because the Poor should not claim his right, which is his by Gods gift.

"The horseleech Lawyer cries for a King, because else the supream power will come into the peoples Representatives lawfully elected. . . .

"The things, Lords, Barons, etc., cry for a King, else their tyranical House of Peers falls down, and all their rotten honour, and all Patents and Corporations, their power being derived from him; if he go down, all their tyranny fals too."

On the other hand

"The honest man that would have liberty, cryes down all interests whatsoever, and to this end he desires common right and equity, which consists of these particulars following:

"1. A just portion for each man to live, that so none need to begge or steale for want, but everyone may live comfortably.

"2. A just Rule for each man to go by, which Rule is to be found in Scripture!"

As a result of these outpourings, Winstanley gathered around him a band of sympathetic followers, forty-six in all, and now, in 1649, issued *A Declaration from the Poor oppressed People of England*. The work opens with these words:

"We, whose names are subscribed, do in the name of all the poor oppressed people of England, declare unto you that call yourselves Lords of Manors and Lords of the Land, that, in regard the King of Righteousness, our Maker, hath inlightened our hearts so far as to see that the Earth was not made purposely for you, to be Lords of it, and we to be your Slaves, Servants, and Beggars, but it was made to be a common Livelihood to all. . . ."

He proceeds to explain the plan in the following language:

"Therefore we are resolved to be cheated no longer, nor to be held under the

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slavish fear of you no longer, seeing the Earth was made for us as well as for you. And if the Common Land belongs to us who are the poor oppressed, surely the woods that grow upon the Commons belong to us likewise. Therefore we are resolved to try the uttermost in the light of reason to know whether we shall be freemen or slaves."

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The deeply religious character of the movement is, however, brought out in the closing paragraph:

"Thus in love we have declared the purpose of our hearts plainly, without flatterie, expecting love and the same sincerity from you, without grumbling or quarreling, being Creatures of your own Image and mould, intending no other matter herein, but to observe the Law of righteous action endeavoring to shut out of the Creation the cursed thing called *Particular Propriety*, which is the cause of all wars, blood shed, theft, and enslaving Laws, that hold the people under miserie."

A few days later the Diggers marched out to George's Hill in Surrey and Winstanley now issued *The true Levellers Standard Advanced, or the State of Community opened and Presented to the Sons of Men*. Here he went still further, stating that "he that works for another, either for Wages or to pay him Rent, works unrighteously." Winstanley called attention to the fundamental evil of the day in the following picturesque language: "All places stink with the abomination of self-seeking Teachers and Rulers: For do I not see that every one Preacheth for money, Counsels for money, and fights for money to maintain particular Interests? And none of these that will pretend to give liberty to the Creation, do give liberty to the Creation: neither can they, for they are enemies to universal liberty, So that the earth stinks with their Hypocrisie, Covetousness, Envy, sottish Ignorance, and Pride."

Were the good Winstanley to advance his Utopia today, it is interesting to speculate as to what changes he would make in the above statement.

CHAPTER VI

THE early part of the eighteenth century was characterized by a great outburst of trading activity and especially of colonial experiments. You all remember the way in which the great Scotch adventurer, John Law, virtually secured control of the French government and harnessed his banking experiment to the famous Mississippi scheme, incidentally engendering, indeed,

a great increase of population in Louisiana, but also leading to the wildest heights of speculation which had yet been known to mankind. When Law issued millions after millions of his paper money, he also made continually new issues of the stock of his Mississippi scheme; and, as these new securities were emitted, they became known in turn popularly as the mothers, daughters, and granddaughters. Everybody took the daughters and the granddaughters to their bosoms and became rich over night, and the prices soared into the empyrean. Fortunes were suddenly made, the lackeys and the servant-maids became great lords and ladies, and for the time being Rue Quincampoix, the Wall Street of the day, became the centre of a feverish activity. Luxury grew to such an extent that even snow was brought down from the hills of the Auvergne and sold in a melting condition on the hot summer day at incredible prices. Nothing seemed to be impossible and all manner of speculative wild-cat schemes were projected.

It is not my purpose to go into the history of this interesting episode. I desire to call your attention primarily to some of the echoes of this great movement in Holland, and especially in England.

On the top of the menu, reproduced in the frontispiece, you will find a plate devoted to a pictorial representation of these many schemes taken from a remarkable book published in 1720. You will notice how all manner of activities are represented in the most drastic fashion and how the procession continually advances up the mountain, until the foremost chariot-and-four tumbles off the top into the sea of oblivion. For the benefit of the members of the Club who belong to the Holland Society, and whose Dutch is therefore up to the mark, I append the name of the book in full:

*Het groote tafereel der dwaasheid vertoonende, de opkomst, voortgang en ondergang der Aëtie, Bubbels en Windnegotie, in Vrankryk, Engeland, en de Nederlanden, gep-
leegt in den Jaare MDCCXX. Zynde een Verzameling von alle de Conditien en
Projecten Van de opgeregte Compagnien van Assurantie, Navigatie, Commerce, etc.
in Nederland, zo wel die in gebruik zyn gebragt, als die door de H. Staaten van eenige
Provintien zyn verworpen: als meede Konstplaat, Comedien en Gedigten door ver-
scheide Liefhebbers uytgegeven tot beschimpinghe dezer verfoeyelyke en bedrieglyke
Handel, waar door in dit Jaar, verscheide Familien en Persoonen van Hooge en Lage
stand zyn geruineerd, en in haar middelen verdorven, en de opregte Negotie gestremt,
zo in Frankryk, Engeland als Nederland. Gedrukt tot waarschonwinge voor de Nako-
melingen, in 't noodlottige Jaar, voor veel Zotte en Wyze. 1720.*

This remarkable work contains portraits of Law and of some of the other leaders of the Haute Finance in France and the adjoining countries. It includes no less than seventy-four magnificent plates comprising the scenes and episodes in the financial centres as well as in the colonies. Among these plates are the interesting examples, reproduced at the bottom of the menu, of card money or of money made out of playing cards which played an important rôle in the early history of Canada.

When the fever of speculation reached England, it assumed a slightly different aspect. It was there connected with the South Sea Company, which had received various privileges at the time in connection with the funding of the English debt. The Company decided to enlarge its commercial operations and, hand in hand with that, entered upon the scheme of increasing the emission of securities by all manner of doubtful expedients. In the rigging of the market, the stock was driven up, in 1720, to over a thousand, and the excitement caused by this led not only to a sympathetic rise in the prices of the securities of a few other trading companies, but induced the formation of all sorts of airy schemes which later on received the significant name of "Bubbles."

The history of these "Bubbles" has never been written in detail, although Anderson, in the third volume of his *Historical and Chronological Deduction of the Origin of Commerce*, gives a summary account of them. There are in my possession a large number of books, pamphlets, and leaflets on these various schemes. It would take too long even to enumerate the names of these projects, but I shall venture to give a selection from some of them. A Lustring Company, of ten thousand shares, which Anderson tells us was never worth one farthing, acquired a capital value of £1,200,000. The declared purposes of other important companies were as follows:

- For the improvement of children's fortunes;
- To make salt water fresh;
- To insure all losses by servants;
- For making oil from poppies;
- For transmuting quicksilver into a precious metal;
- For building a fleet of ships against pirates;
- For building hospitals for bastards;
- For a more inoffensive method of emptying and cleansing outhouses;
- For a better cure of venereal disease;

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For furnishing merchants with money;
For importing large jackasses from Spain, for which purpose marsh lands near Woolwich will be purchased (a clergyman, long since dead, was at the head of this);
For furnishing funerals;
For paying pensions to widows;
For insuring and increasing children's fortunes;
For furnishing merchants with watches.

One of the most popular companies was organized to construct a wheel for perpetual motion. One of the most successful companies was designed to provide for an undertaking, the purpose of which was to be kept secret for the present, but which would later on be made public. This, I believe, was oversubscribed several times.

Exchange Alley was so crowded during all these days that passage became difficult and the newspapers appeared with supplements filled with enormous advertisements of the various "Bubbles." Anderson tells us that "Some of the obscure keepers of the books of subscription, contenting themselves with what they had gotten in the forenoon, were not to be found on the afternoon of the same day, the rooms that they had hired for a day being shut up, and they and their subscription books never heard of more." He tells us further that "any impudent impostor, whilst the delusion was at its greatest height, needed only to hire a room at some office or other house near that Alley for a few hours, for something relative to commerce, manufacture, plantations, or some supposed invention, either newly hatched out of his own brain or else stolen from some of the many abortive projects, having first advertised it in the newspapers the preceding day, and he might, in a few hours, find subscribers for one or two millions (and in some cases, more) of imaginary stock."

One of the developments was advertised as follows: "For subscribing two millions to a certain promising or profitable design, which will hereafter be promulgated."

One of the projects mentioned in the preceding list was called the Globe Permits Company. Each of these "permits" sold as high as sixty guineas apiece. They were nothing but square bits of playing card bearing the impression of a seal in wax, being the sign of the Globe tavern in the neighborhood, with the motto or inscription of sailcloth permits, without any name signed thereon.

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The fortunate owners were thereafter to be permitted to start a new sailcloth manufactory. A newspaper even contained the following advertisement, which was, however, in all probability, intended as a caricature: "At a certain place on Tuesday next books will be opened for a subscription of two millions for the invention of melting down sawdust chips and casting them into clear deal boards without cracks or knots."

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When the crash came, thousands were of course ruined and the distress was widespread, so general had the speculative mania become. The sad experience of the South Sea schemes led to the enactment of the Bubble Act in England, which not only put an end to such projects in the future, but which incidentally introduced the principle of unlimited liability of shareholders—a principle which it took considerably more than a century to modify.

The publications of the Bubbles period in England certainly deserve to be classed among the curiosities of literature and at the same time illustrate the foibles and the idiosyncrasies of the human mind.

CHAPTER VII

ADAM SMITH, so long reputed to be the father of political economy, wrote his *Wealth of Nations* in 1776, a year which is also memorable as that of the Declaration of Independence and the invention by Watts of the steam engine. From that time on we can no longer be said to deal with early economic literature. I cannot, however, refrain from calling attention to two interesting episodes of about this period, one in Great Britain and one in the United States.

The French Revolution, as is well known, led to sympathetic murmurings in England at the beginning of the last decade of the eighteenth century, and gave rise to a great outpouring of pamphlet literature on the part of both Radicals and Conservatives, on the general question of private property. It would well repay us to look at some of the interesting productions of the time, but I shall content myself with calling attention to only one, and that perhaps among the rarest of the publications of the period.

It will be remembered that one of the leading statesmen in England inadvertently spoke in a contemptuous strain of "the swinish multitude." This afforded an opportunity to Thomas Spence, who had already suffered considerable opprobrium, and in fact even imprisonment, for publishing literature in which

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he objected to private property, especially in land. He now published, in 1793, a periodical in three volumes, with a title as follows:

Pigs' Meat or Lessons for the Swinish Multitude, Published in weekly penny numbers. Collected by the Poor Man's Advocate (an old Veteran in the Cause of Freedom) in the Course of his Readings for more than Twenty Years.

Intended To promote among the Labouring part of Mankind proper Ideas of their Situation, of their Importance, and of their Rights;

And to Convince Them That the forlorn Condition has not been entirely overlooked and forgotten, nor their just Cause unpleaded, neither by their Maker, nor by the best and most enlightened of Men of all Ages.

Instead of presenting his own views, Spence fills the three volumes with quotations from all possible sources, ancient and modern, continental and British, designed to uphold the claims of the lower classes. In his introduction the editor modestly gives vent to the admirable opinion that "A judicious compiler is better than a bad author." His defence of compilation is put in an allegory entitled "The Bee and the Spider." This is so interesting that it deserves to be quoted in full:

"The Bee and the Spider. From Dodsley's Fables. The Bee and the Spider once entered into a warm debate, which was the better artist. The Spider urged her skill in the mathematics, and asserted, that no one was half so well acquainted as herself with the construction of lines, angles, squares, and circles: that the web she daily wove was a specimen of art inimitable by any other creature in the universe; and besides, that her works were derived from herself alone, the product of her own bowels, whereas the boasted honey of the Bee was stolen from every herb and flower of the field; nay, that she had obligations even to the meanest weeds. To this the Bee replied, that she was in hopes the art of extracting honey from the meanest weeds would at least have been allowed her as an excellence; and, that as to her stealing sweets from the herbs, and flowers of the field, her skill was therein so conspicuous, that no flower ever suffered the least diminution of its fragrance from so delicate an operation. Then, as to the Spider's vaunted knowledge in the construction of lines and angles, she believed she might safely rest the merits of her cause on the regularity alone of her combs; but since she could add this, the sweetness and excellence of her honey, and the various purposes to which her wax was employed, she had nothing to fear from the comparison of her skill with that of the

weaver of a flimsy cobweb; for the value of every art, she observed, is chiefly by its use."

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At some future time it would be interesting to quote in full some of the passages of this most rare and interesting periodical.

The last series of volumes to which I desire to call attention were written in the United States in 1795 at the time of the excitement caused by Jay's treaty with England, which, it will be remembered, so greatly influenced the whole economic situation in the United States in 1794. The chief pamphleteer in the country at that time was the notorious William Cobbett, who was born in England in 1762 and who, after a rather checkered literary career in Nova Scotia, settled in Philadelphia in the early '90's. As the current of opinion at that time was still setting rather strongly in favor of France, Cobbett decided to champion his native country and wrote that series of caustic, abusive, and scurrilous criticisms which, under the pseudonym of Peter Porcupine, soon attracted great attention. Amid the mass of interesting rejoinders, many of which deal with economic questions and most of which are now of excessive rarity, I select a few items in order to show the temper of the day. Among such titles are the following:

A Rub from Snub or a Cursory analytical Epistle: Addressed to Peter Porcupine, Author of the Bone to Gnaw, Kick for a Bite, etc., Containing Glad tidings for the Democrats, and a Word of Comfort to Mrs. S. Rowson, Wherein the said porcupine's moral, political, critical, and literary character is fully illustrated. Philadelphia, 1795.

Another is:

A Pill for Porcupine: being a Specific for an Obstinate Itching Which that Hireling has long contracted for Lying and Calumny, containing, A Vindication of the American, French, and Irish Characters, against his scurrilities By a friend to Political Equality. Philadelphia, 1796.

A third very popular work was entitled:

The Adventures of a Porcupine; or, The Villain unmask'd: being the Genuine memoirs of a Notorious Rogue lately in the British Army, and Ci-devant member of an extensive light-fingered association in England Containing a Narrative of the most Extraordinary and Unexampled Depravity of Conduct perhaps Ever Exhibited to the World. In a letter to a young gentleman in New York "These things are strange, but not more strange than true." To which is added, A Postscript to Peter Porcupine; being Remarks On a pamphlet lately published by him, entitled, his "Life and Adven-

tures." By Daniel Detector. "I'll tell the bold fac'd villain that he lies." Embellished with the likeness of the porcupine. Philadelphia, 1796.

Another caustic reply was entitled:

A Roaster; or, A Check to the Progress of Political Blasphemy: intended as a brief reply to Peter Porcupine alias Billy Cobler. By Sim Sansculotte. Philadelphia MDCCXCVI.

Perhaps the most effective answer was the one entitled:

The Imposter Detected, or A Review of Some of the writings of "Peter Porcupine" by Timothy Tickletohy "He is a Monster of such horrid mien As to be hated, needs but to be seen." Pope. To which is annexed A Refreshment for the memory of William Cobbet, by Samuel F. Bradford Philadelphia, 1796.

Were the evening not so far advanced I should have been glad to quote from some of the passages in these pamphlets and books which are no less spicy than the titles themselves.

This brings to a close my fugitive remarks on some of the curiosities of early economic literature. I have been able to make only a very slight selection from the wealth of material—a material so abundant that some day perhaps an entire volume may be devoted to the subject. Even these few illustrations, however, will suffice to show that writers on economic topics are no less human than other individuals, and that the bright light of scientific truth is often be-

dimmed by the infirmities of temper and idiosyncracies of character that

are common to all mankind. Above all, these selections will, I trust,

prove that even the supposedly arid domain of economic

literature affords a field in which a hobby-horse can

prance to his heart's content, and that the partic-

ular hobby which is ridden by your host

of the evening is sufficiently divert-

ing to justify membership in

this august body of

discriminating

enthusiasts.



PRINTED BY JOHN HENRY NASH SAN FRANCISCO

IN THE MONTH OF MAY MDCCCCXX

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No. 4

